THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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Devotees offer puja on Maha Shivaratri day at the Shivoham Shiva temple on Old Airport Road in Bengaluru on Tuesday | Nagaraja Gadekal

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K'taka student killed in Ukraine

Naveen had stepped out to buy snacks for his friends when Russian shell exploded

ARUNKUMAR HURALIMATH
@Haveri/Bengaluru

THAT niggling fear of young, helpless Indian students falling victim to the war came true on Tuesday, as a medical student from Karnataka, studying at Kharkiv city in Ukraine, was killed in Russian shelling early in the morning.

The 21-year-old Naveen Shekharappa Gyanagoudar from Chalageri village of Ranebennur taluk in Haveri district had stepped out of an underground metro station, where he and other Indian students were holed up, to buy snacks for himself and his friends when the bombs started going off in Kharkiv, where the invading Russian troops have launched an intense assault for the last two days.

Another student from the same village who was with Naveen at that time was injured, said Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in Bengaluru . However, when The New Indian Express contacted the parents of two students from the village, who are studying at Kharkiv, they said that their children are safe.

After the Russian assault started, Naveen -- who was a fourth-year student at the Kharkiv National Medical University, and his friends were staying at the Beketova Metro Tunnel. They were running short of food and water and had spent entire Monday without food. Naveen, who was the senior among his group, decided to step out and buy some snacks for himself and his friends when he was killed in the shelling.

'Circumstances of death still not clear'

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said, "The circumstances of how Naveen died are not clear. From what we understand from his friends, they had come out to buy groceries. He was standing in a line when he was hit. It is not clear (what happened)."

Around 7 am (Ukraine time), Naveen headed to a supermarket located just 50 metres from the metrostation. As there was a huge rush, he could not return early and at 7.58 am, he called his friend asking him to transfer some cash as he was short of money at the supermarket cash counter.

When he did not come back even 10 minutes after buying the snacks, his friends called him on his phone at 8.10 am, but a local resident answered the call and told them that Naveeen was killed in the shelling. "We were stunned. Naveen went to buy food for all of us and he died," said his friend Amit, who was inconsolable. CONTINUED ON: P4

Refugees wait to board a bus in Medyka, Poland, on Tuesday after fleeing Ukraine | AP

IAF to join evacuation exercise

New Delhi: With one Indian student killed in shelling in Kharkiv, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to expedite the process of evacuating other Indians from Ukraine. He has asked the Air Force to join the process under Operation Ganga. The IAF is likely to deploy C 17 planes, which is a large transport aircraft. Until now, only private carriers were involved. P7

Another student hurt: CM

Bengaluru: Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday said that another student who was with Naveen Gynagoudar and from his village -- Chalageri -- was also injured in the shelling. But, when TNIE contacted the parents of two students from the village, they said their children are safe. The CM told Naveen's father, Shekar Goudar, that the government is making all efforts to bring the body back. P4

Attack coming, leave now, Russia warns Kyiv residents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

IN the deadliest attack in Ukraine so far, Russia on Tuesday struck the central square in Kharkiv, killing dozens and injuring many more.

Even as the second round of peace talks are set to take place on Wednesday, Russia seems to be changing its war strategy by hitting targets regardless of civilian casualties. After unleashing terror in Ukraine's second largest city, Russia ordered a large convoy of armored vehicles, tanks, artillery and support vehicles to move towards capital Kyiv, a city of three million people.

By Tuesday evening, the troops were just 25 km away from the centre, satellite imagery showed. In a chilling warning to Kyiv residents, Russia ordered them to leave the city as all strategic targets are going to be destroyed. Late in the evening, an attack on the Kyiv TV tower killed five people.

All Indians have left Kyiv and nobody has been left behind, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Tuesday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged Russia has committed war crime by targeting Kharkiv's main square and causing civilian casualties. While Russia's brutal assault drew widespread criticism, there were also unconfirmed reports of use of cluster bombs in populated areas. However, Moscow maintained it was targeting only military assets and accused Kyiv of using civilians as human shields. Hinting that Moscow won't easily back off, Russian Defence Minister General Sergey Shoygu said the offensive will continue until the goals are achieved.

Earlier, 70 Ukrainian soldiers were killed after a military base in Okhtyrka came under attack, local authorities said.

According to the UN human rights office, nearly 7 lakh people have already fled the country and it has recorded the deaths of 136 civilians, including 13 children.

Want to see my son's body, says father

G SUBHASH CHANDRA
@Chalageri (Haveri dist)

SHEKHAR Gyana Goudar, father of Naveen — who was killed in Russian shelling at Kharkiv in Ukraine on Tuesday, had only one question to those who visited him: When is his son's body being brought back?

Shekhar, who was inconsolable, said that he spoke to Naveen just minutes before his death.

The two would make WhatsApp video calls to each other at least three times a day. "He used to tell me about how he and his friends were cold and had no food and water. I used to instill confidence in him."

FULL REPORT: P4

Karnataka Feb GST collection clocks ₹9,176 cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

EVEN as Chief Minister Basavraj Bommai gives final touches to the state budget, GST Collection in Karnataka for February touched Rs 9,176 crore, which is a 21 per cent increase for the same period last year. But as compared to accruals at Rs 9,048 crore in November last year, the rise does not seem significant, experts pointed out.

While some said this is an indication of the economy on the path to recovery, others said there is still a long road ahead before it stabilises to Pre-February 2019 levels.

The higher collection of GST is because of anti-evasion measures taken by the government and stricter enforcement against fake bills. There has also been encouraging revenue collection due to rate rationalisation, they said. P5

EXPRESS READ

28 terrorists killed in J&K encounters this yr

Srinagar: There has been a surge in encounters between terrorists and security forces in J&K this year. Twenty-eight terrorists have been killed in 16 gunfights and five encounters in the same period last year.

NATIONWIDE	FEB 28	MARCH 1
Fresh cases	8,013	6,915
Recoveries	15,765	16,864
Deaths	119	180
KARNATAKA	FEB 28	MARCH 1
Fresh cases	268	202
Recoveries	1,119	971
Deaths	14	7

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